MEDITATIONS

In my CONFINEMENT,

When my Houſe was Viſited with the

Sickneſs:

In *April*, *May* and *June*, 1666.

In which time I buried two Children, and had three more of my Family Sick.

LONDON,

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BRITISH MUSEUM

To my much *Honoured Friends*, whoſe *Kindneſs* and *Affection* hath been expreſſed to me in my late *Affliction*: To whom I render hearty *Thanks*, and wiſh *Health* and *Proſperity*.

GIve ear, (my courteous friends,) *and lend your vote*,
To this my doleful ſad and Swan-like *note*,
Though not ſo ſweet, (*as that is ſaid*,) *more true*,
Which cauſeth me my cheeks with tears bedew:
That, *is a* Poet's fiction, *of the* Swan;
This, *ſobbs and groans of an* afflicted man,
One that with ſorrows *God doth* caſtigate,
That he may fit him for a better ſtate.
Expect not now, in theſe lines, Melody;
Nor ſhall I promiſe any Harmony.
Where grief *predominates, it is a reyne*,
To check the Fancy, *and* Invention's *ſtrayne*.
This Peece *at beſt, is rough, and unpolite*,
Not burniſh'd o're with art *to make it bright*
No elegancy *here is interlac'd*,
Which might the Reader Court, *to be embrac'd*.
Courtſhip *with me, was then quite out of* faſhion,
When whole months paſs'd, and ſcarce a ſalutation:
Sighs *here, are* Accents, Periods *end with* tears,
And for the Burthen, *'tis a Maſſe of* fears.
I have no argument *that may incline*
You for to read this Tract, but that, 'tis mine.

Nor do I Judge it worth your pains, yet take
It, and peruſe it, for the Authours ſake:
Accept of my endevours; *where they'r ſhort,*
I beg your patience, *and your* pardon *for't.*

Thomas Clarke.

MEDITATIONS

MEDITATIONS
IN MY
CONFINEMENT, &c.

WHen *mercyes* loſe their *end*, and cannot *draw*,
And *Sins* are froze ſo *hard*, they will not *thaw*
By gentle means, then is *Corrections rod*
Sent, by *Afflictions*, to *drive* men to God.
And may he grant, that I ſo underſtand
The *voyce* of his *ſevere chaſtiſing hand*,
That making the right *uſe* for which 'twas ſent,
I may from *Sin* turn, God from's *Puniſhment*.
My houſe the houſe of *mourning*'s made, then how
Can *Mirth* or *Muſick* reliſh with me now?
Or if I ſhould dare to compoſe a *Verſe*,
What fitter ſubject, then of *Grave* or *Herſe*,
Or *Winding-ſheet*? Theſe only be my *Theam*
On which my thoughts are, and whereof I dream;
And waking find my ſelf alive, and wonder,
That *Soul* is not from *Body* reft aſunder:
Then do I rouze, and pluck my Spirits up,
And *hope* gets ground, that yet that *bitter cup*
May be prorogu'd, and ſweetned ſo that I
Prepar'd may better be, and fit to dye.
And then again, my Sins ſtart up and ſtare
Me in the face, and ask me how I dare
Preſume on mercy, ſince demerit's ſuch,
That what's inflicted yet, is but a touch
Or taſte of that Divine and moſt juſt *wrath*
The number of my Sins deſerved hath;

Which

Which thing (ſo true, my Conſcience can't deny)
Doth heighten much my preſent *miſery*.
But oh, beſides this, how doth the *World* frown
Upon one by his *Maker* thus caſt down!
Who (as *Job*'s friends did, theſe) ſtand in a maze,
And at a diſtance too, (as they) to gaze:
Again, as they did, ſo do theſe do here,
Raſhly prejudg, and condemn too, I fear;
And well it were, if pity theſe ſo take,
As (doubtleſs) was in them for good *Job*'s ſake:
Yet (to a Proverb) are they on record
Mis'rable Comforters, to be abhorr'd.
But now (alaſs) if I ſhould ſpeak my mind,
How juſtly may I call this Age unkind?
Who is it that remembers *Joſeph*'s ſmart?
Or his afflictions ever takes to heart?
Nay, rather, is not ſhame, reproach, and ſcorn,
The portion here of moſt that lye forlorn?
And chiefly, ſuch whom God, to evidence
His mighty pow'r by his wiſe providence,
Hath humbled by ſevereſt *diſpenſation*
Of the *Diſtemper*, or the *Viſitation*;
The *Peſtilence* (I mean,) or (now as 'tis
Called) [*the Sickneſs*] with an *Emphaſis*;
A name peculiar for it, and moſt fit,
Denoting and comprising [*all*] in it.
And if the *name* do carry ſo much *dread*,
What wonder if the *thing* it ſelf ſtrikes *dead*?
Of thoſe three Judgements, ſuper-eminent,
So often threatned by th' Omnipotent,
This of them all doth ſeem unto a Land,
The moſt immediate ſtroke from his own hand.
This God's *Artill'ry* is, and Himſelf like;
Who's he that can defend, when it doth ſtrike?

An *arrow* (call'd for ſwiftneſs) from a *Bow*,
Pointed to rich and poor, to high and low:
It *Sex*, nor *Age*, nor *Perſon* doth reſpect,
Nor can exemption be: who may expect
Favour? The *force* of *Youth's* no *Priviledge*,
No *ſtrength* of *Conſtitution* blunts its edge:
The *Soveraignty* of *Druggs* cannot reſiſt,
It wounds and kills ev'n where and whom it liſt.
This *arrow* flees by *day*, yet who can ſee it?
A terrour 'tis by *night*, and none can flee it;
It walks in *darkneſs*, and who then can ſhun it?
And vain it is to think they may outrun it.
What ſhield can guard the angry *Angel's* blow?
Who hath ſo many by his *ſtroke* laid low:
What *Rhet'rick* either can *perſwade* or *charm*
This furious *Meſſenger* to ſlack his *Arm*?
The rich man's *Coffers*, nor his *Bags* can bribe it,
Neither the skilful *Artiſt* can preſcribe it;
The valiant *Soldier* dareth not alarm it,
Nor can the *black Magicians* philters charm it;
The *Lord* and *Begger* equally do ſtand,
And both alike accounted in *Death's* hand.
Death is the *King of Terrours*, and a man,
At very thoughts thereof, grows pale, and wan:
And though whats'ever ſickneſs cauſing *Death*,
Payes Mortals *debt* to *Nature*, ſtops our *breath*;
Yet this of all *Diſeaſes* mark'd doth lye,
(As I may ſay) dip'd to a *double-dye*:
And, which is like the Serpents deadly *ſting*,
Poyſons all o're; *That*, whence all *woes* do ſpring
To **Body**, **State**, **Relations**, **Liberty**,
To **Friends**, **Acquaintance**, and **Society**;
And all diſcomforts elſe to humane kind
'Tis couch'd here in the *Abſtract*, we may find.

Some

Some *Characters* whereof, I here ſhall give,
To ſhew it is, in kind, *ſuperlative*
Unto all other, for *diſconſolation*
Which take in this epitomis'd *Relation*.

The extremity of this Diſtemper to the Body *and Perſon.*

IN *Body*, ſee what tumours ulcerating,
Tearing the fleſh, ev'n unto macerating,
With Biles, and Botches, Carbuncles and Blains;
All which do torture with exceſſive pains:
Or if not ſo, it worſe in bowels lyes,
Unſpeakably tormenting till it dyes,
Complexed alwayes, and in high extremes
Of Agues chillneſs, mix'd with Feavers flames.
And if (in ought unto the Patient ſick)
It favour ſhews, 'tis in diſpatching quick;
Or elſe in this, unto the party ſhowing
By its Death-marks, where ſuddainly he's going.
But oft not ſo, for many long do lye
In extreme languiſhing ſad miſery.
With Intrall-racking-laxes vehement,
And retching vomitings moſt violent.
Oft times the mind too's held with ſtupefaction,
And is bereft of reaſon by diſtraction;
Which thing enough is, to bring deſperation,
At leaſt a hind'rance 'tis to preparation.
Next unto life it ſelf, health's preſervation,
And lawful means for *Bodyes* reſtoration,
By men eſteem'd is much, both to prevent,
And when there's need, to cure the Patient.

All

All count Phyſicians uſeful, commendable;
Their calling noble, practice laudable;
In wiſdom, learning, known experience, grave;
And carriage ſuitable to all, they have;
Theſe perſons of ſuch honour are, and worth,
As ſome almoſt for Demi-Gods, ſet forth;
Believing, they have pow'r to reſcue Death,
At leaſt to lengthen out the leaſe of Breath.
But, here, the Doctors ſcruple, are not free
In any thing except in taking fee;
And as to that, they're ready men, and quick,
But ſlack enough in viſiting the Sick,
And chiefly then, the time when there's moſt need,
Their heighth of Art and Skill, to ſhew indeed.
This is to very many much addition,
Unto their ſad deplorable condition,
Becauſe on theſe men they did much depend,
From Sickneſs rage their *Bodies* to defend:
At leaſt, expecting, if it ſhould them ſeiſe,
Theſe would within call be, to give them eaſe.
But they are fled (perhaps); if not, how e're,
To ſee ſuch Patients they will give no ear.
Here I muſt leave them too, and if they dye,
Let their great Doctors anſwer't, and not I.
Such are the *Bodie's* ſuff'rings, whil'ſt there's breath,
And ſome there are (I'le ſhew) that ſurvive Death,
For Death's not all in this Diſtemper: Here,
The meer Concomitants thereof (which fear
And terrour works upon the Patient ſo)
Makes Death (as 'twere) to ſtrike a double blow;
And its Attendants are ſo repreſented,
As if Death's ſtroke by horrour were prevented.
The bitterneſs is multiply'd by th' quality,
Which ſwells the product of Calamity

Into ſo vaſt a ſum, figures can't do't,
Nor number or proportion can reach to't.
'Tis ſudden, ſolit'ry, incurable,
And what ſo comfortleſs? ſo terrible?
This Sickneſs alſo, after Death doth ſeem
To trample o're the dead, with diſeſteem;
And (Victor-like, o're Captives) with deſpight,
Denyes ſuch Obſequies and fun'rall rite,
Which in a ſolemn manner is moſt due,
As we have ſeen in this late time, not few.
How hath ſome poſted been to Graves, before
They were quite cold, and ſcarce found cov'ring o're?
And 'ſtead of Friends and Mourners following there,
How did all ſhun them, that they did come near?
'Twas well if Bearers could be got for mony,
Mens hearts through fear were grown ſo hard and ſtony.
How were ſome thrown in Carts and drawn in pace
Much like Offenders, t' Execution place?
And as for Buriall, one in many ſcore
Had not a word of any Pray'r ſaid o're.
And (in the Countrey,) ſome were ty'd to poles,
Dragg'd by the Neck with ropes, and pok'd in holes;
Whilſt other Carcaſſes were left in field,
To ſee what Buriall Beaſts and Fowls would yield.
This like a ſecond death here, did appear,
Which did coſt many a heart-peircing tear,
Of ſuch as did ſurvive, fearing that they
Themſelves, if ſeized, might go the ſame way.
And thus much of the Dying, or the Sick
Of this Diſtemper; ſomething of the quick
May here be ſaid: The healthy and the ſound
That ne're have touch by't, yet receive a wound:
This ſeems a Paradox, but it is true,
As Inſtances I could give, not a few;

For

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For, (others being dead,) this doth bereave
Theſe of the comforts which they ſhould receive.
Alas! how fares it, with whole Families,
Whereout (perhaps) one only thereof dyes?
When as the reſt (pent up and all in tears,
In howerly expectation of their fears)
Tranſported are, with grief and terrour made,
As if that all their Necks o'th block were laid.
And we well know ſuch ſpectacles have been,
That this (God's Beſome) hath ſwept houſes clean:
Theſe thoughts, amazements, and ſurprizals ſtrange,
(Acted by fear alone) ſuch ſudden change
Hath wrought in ſome, (it hath ſo deer been rated,
Their lives at ſtake,) Death hath been ante-dated.
What ſuff'rings more to *Body* or the *Mind*,
Are uſher'd in, when thus a man's confin'd,
Muſt here in this place waved be, leſt I
Be juſtly taxed with prolixity.
I could here tell ye, how the Neighbours keep
Their diſtance, as not daring ſcarce to peep
Out of their dores, or on that ſide to look,
Leſt that Infection may be thereby took:
And how all Paſſengers that go that way,
Will o're the Kennel skip as from a fray,
How few of many, that go by, and know,
Will aſk, How do ye, or like kindneſs ſhow.
Theſe things diſmay a *Body* very much,
(But here, I'le leave, I meant only a touch,)
And though this is the courſe us'd conſtantly,
Yet I confeſs I've found much courteſie:
For neighbours have been very kind to me
In this my long and ſad extremity.

The extraordinary Expence *and damage to* Estate, *that this Diſtemper brings.*

NExt, for *Eſtate*, How can there a worſe foil
Befall a man then this? or greater ſpoil
Unto his fortunes? 'ſpecially if low,
And weak i'th world; for then down he muſt go.
A two-fold ſting 'tis, 'gainſt both which no fence,
One points to loſs, the other to expence.
It ſtops *Gain's* current, cauſeth that ebb low,
And ſets ope *Charge's* ſluce, to Overflow:
As firſt, it blocks up Commerce, barrs all Trade,
For of a Shop no uſe at all is made,
Nor other Craft, the onely means whereby
A man maintains himſelf and Family;
So thus, no *gain* is got, that's known full well,
For none with ſuch will either buy or ſell.
And for *Expences* daily running out,
I need ſay little, for that's out of doubt.
'Twixt Doctors, Surgeons, Phyſick, pay of Nurſe,
(As is the Proverb) hand ne're out of purſe.
Upon this Subject, I might more enlarge,
Having had ſad experience of the charge,
Not only of *expence*, but dammage-coſt,
Th' account whereof 's not yet made up what loſt;
All which in Characters are written ſo,
That ſtill lyes legible in Folio:
Should I ſpeak plain, ſure there could not be worſe
Sickneſs of *Body*, to make ſick the *purſe*.

The Uncomfortableneſs of this Diſtemper in Debarring the Viſits of Relations *and* Kindred.

TOuching *Relations*: Bonds of ſtrongeſt tye,
By *Nature* ſeal'd, do almoſt Cancell'd lye,
As out of date; during this time of danger,
One to another being as a ſtranger.
When-as at other times, this neer Connexion
Mounted upon the Wing of dear Affection,
Such pow'r hath in't, that nothing ſhould have hindred
The ſwift and frequent Viſits of their *Kindred*.
Like as a burning Beacon at Invaſions
Calls quick aſſiſtance, ſo 'tis with *Relations*:
If any be aſſaulted in their health,
How ſoon the reſt in that ſmall *Common-wealth*
Haſte to th' afflicted Member? for to yield
All ſuccour to it, him from Death to ſhield,
By Counſel, Care, and what elſe may conduce
Both to the outward means, and Comforts uſe.
But this hath ſuch malevolent Aſpect,
As if that *Nature* did her ſelf neglect,
And unto admiration works this wonder,
Neareſt of *Kin* are oft fartheſt aſunder.
The *Daughter* dareth not approach the *Mother*,
Nor dares one *Brother* to come at *another*.
The *Father* may not his own *Child* come near,
Nor may the *Child* the *Parents* ſee for fear.
The *Mother* doth bewail her *Child* at diſtance,
The *Child* oft wants the *Mothers* kind aſſiſtance.

Yet may we not theſe judge unnatural,
Nor in the leaſt for this, unkind them call.
Nor do I mean, as if their love, good will,
Or ſweet affections ſtifled are: Theſe ſtill
May in their vigour flouriſh, be as green,
As firm, and ſtrong, as ever they have been.
The fire hid in the Embers is not out,
The ſeeming-dead Tree, in the Spring doth ſprout,
Relations care and kindneſs doth not quite
Conſiſt in outward viſits, and in ſight
Of their *Allies*: nor doth it argue lack
Of Love in them, whom danger thus keeps back:
This ſheweth only Fear's predomination,
The ſtrongeſt paſſion in its operation,
And boundleſs in th' extreme; for (out of doubt)
By this are ſtrange effects, paſt finding out.
And now aſſuredly 'twill be confeſs'd
Greateſt Diſcomforts muſt lye in the Breaſt
Of ſuch who are afflicted with this ſore
And ſaddeſt puniſhment (ſpoke of before)
Which doth reciprocally add much grief
Either to other, even paſt belief;
When ſolemnly they may not at laſt breath,
Take leave of one another before Death:
Theſe, piercing Aggravations are indeed,
To ſink the ſpirits, make the heart to bleed.

The Abridgment of Liberty, *by Confinement, in this Diſtemper.*

AND now I come to treat of *Liberty*,
Or how that is abridg'd (by this) to ſee.
That which oppoſeth *Liberty*, is *thrall*,
As is a *Riſe* the oppoſite to *Fall*,
So contraryes compar'd with one another,
Doth Illuſtration bring each to the other.
In this caſe, (ſure) it's verify'd what's ſaid,
A man's own *houſe* is then his *priſon* made.
For either hee's therein moſt ſtrictly *lock'd*
By Law's conſtraint upon him, or elſe *yok'd*
By *ſelf-Confinement*, (which is little leſs)
On his Paroll, (not daring to tranſgreſs,
Leſt he offence in any kind ſhould give
Unto his Neighbours, who about him live.)
This then enough is, and a proof ſufficient
That herein lyes *reſtraint* and detriment,
For *Liberty's privation* (in extent)
Differs but little from *Impriſonment*,
Except herein, and then the diff'rence much,
That theſe God's *Priſ'ners* are, (others not ſuch,)
And he alone, and none but he can eaſe
Their ſmart and pain, and ſeal them a *Releaſe*;
'Tis He offended is, enters the *Action*,
Order's th' *Arreſt*, requireth *ſatisfaction*:
He will withdraw his *ſute*, and ſet ſuch *free*,
Who on him do depend for *Liberty*;
And though provok'd, yet prone to mercy ſtill,
To them that humble are, and wait his will,

And

And ſince they cannot *ſatisfie*, 'tis done,
If but believe; their *Baile* is his own Son.
Oh! that men would take pattern here, and ſee
That they as merciful to *Priſ'ners* be;
That patiently they would forbear and ſtay,
With them that have it not, till they can pay.
But for my own part, I muſt here confeſs,
Much *Priviledge* I had in my diſtreſs.
I was not *padlock'd* in, nor by a *guard*
Of *Watchmen* by conſtraint, of *freedom barr'd:*
But wholly left unto my own diſcretion,
Which kindneſs ſhew'd, in me took much Impreſſion.
This I acknowledge was my Neighbours love,
Which (prais'd be God) did them no dammage prove;
Nor further uſe did I of that here make,
Then lawfully I might with good leave take.

The Uncomfortableneſs of this Diſtemper, diſſolving for the preſent the bands of Friendſhip.

THe next thing is to ſhew how palpable
This is to *Friends*, and undemonſtrable,
For herein ſuch a high diſcomfort lyes,
That greater cannot amongſt *friends* ariſe:
'Twixt reall *Friends*, indeed a *True-love-knot*
Is ty'd, not to be loos'ned, or forgot
So long as life doth laſt in this our ſtation,
Which without doubt ſurpaſſes all relation.
The wiſe man ſaith, A *friend* is more then brother,
Affection is ſo grafted each in other:

And

And ſure *this* is the ſtrongeſt tye that can
Here in this world be, to link man to man.
For, how by Counſels ſweet, and Courteſie
Doth one *Friend* ſtrive another to outvye?
And ſearch the heart, if grief do lye hid there,
To vent it thence, that each their ſhare may bear?
And thorow thick and thin, mount high, low dive,
That they each others ſpirits may revive.
When good news is, theſe do congratulate;
When ſorrowful, or bad, commiſerate:
In health and happineſs, they harmonize,
In ſickneſs and diſcomforts, ſympathize.
Friendſhip's a ray of the Diviner love,
Which ſets the wheels awork, and pity move
In *friends* towards th' afflicted: But alaſs!
Pity can't be exerted in this Caſe
As it ſhould be, for it will not amount
To one bare viſit, upon this account:
Theſe cannot more than *others* quit their fear,
They love *friends* well, but their own life is dear;
Or ſhould they dare, 'twould charg'd be in effect,
As a fool-hardy fam'ly diſreſpect:
Therefore *friends*, *friends* muſt pardon, when 'tis ſo,
That way fear turns the beam the Scale will go.
As when the Huntſman's Bow hath mark'd a Deer,
The Herd the chaſed one wil not come neer,
And though for help or ſhelter it may run
Sometimes amongſt them, yet they ſtill it ſhun:
So 'tis with thoſe whom this Diſeaſe doth take,
All *Conſorts* and *Aſſociates* ſtraight forſake,
Though ne'r ſo intimate perhaps before,
No converſe now can be on any ſcore,
Friends ſtand at diſtance, all do ſuch men fly,
Nordare for fear to keep them Company.

Yet though fear doth thus *friendſhip's* bands diſſolve,
'Tis but for preſent, 'twill again revolve.
Now ſince faſt *friends* thus bounded are in dangers,
Why think we much, or expect more from ſtrangers.
But let not me complain 'tis dark, when light
Shined on me, ev'n in the gloomy'ſt night?
I mean, favours bright beams on *friendſhip's* ſcore,
Which were not meerly *how d'yees* at the dore,
But *real viſits*; and ſo influential,
Yielding refreſhings to me, moſt eſſential:
'Twas a *ſupply*, for kind, moſt anſwerable
To all things, and a *ſupport* ſuitable:
A healing *Plaiſter* made for any ſore,
And a *key* fitted unto ev'ry dore:
What ſhall I more ſay, I'le not Counſel keep,
This bounty did me make for joy to weep.
Which love of theirs, I ſhall acknowledge ever,
And to my ſlender power will endevour
To quit my ſelf from baſe Ingratitude,
By a ſelf-Off'ring of ſuch ſervitude
As either I can ſtudy, they Command,
Or may expected be from ſuch a hand.
In the mean time, this ſhall not wanting be,
My thanks to them for their good will to me;
And as a fore-taſt of that due reſpect
I owe unto them, let me here direct
This fervent *Option*, which as an *Oblation*
I tender, winged with my heart's *Oration*.

May *health* and *happineſs* alwayes attend ye,
A *Proſp'rous gale* in all things, may *befriend* ye;
Wiſdome in all your *actions*, may *direct* ye;
The *Pow'rs-Divine*, from *dangers* may *protect* ye;
No *Violent Diſtemper* may e're ſeize ye,
Nor ought that's hurtful may i'th leaſt diſeaſe ye:

May *friends* increaſed be, and *foes* that hate ye,
With ſhame convinc'd, may ſtrive to imitate ye:
May *Vertues* flouriſh in, and ſo improve ye,
That others may both *Æmulate* and *love* ye;
Your *perſons* honour'd ſo, may none dare ſlight ye,
Your *Wives* and *Children* ſuch, may moſt delight ye:
May your *good names* be ſtill preſerved by ye,
May ſland'ring *Tongue-detractors* not come nigh ye;
In *States* and *Families*, may *Angels* guard ye,
And at the laſt, may *Heavens King* reward ye.

The Uncomfortableneſs of this Diſtemper in reference to breaking off all Acquaintance *and* Society.

AS for **Acquaintance** and **Society**,
(For theſe may well together joyned be,)
It is a large theam to diſcuſſe: But how
By this 'tis interrupted, I may ſhow
In few particulars, as well as many,
The reſt are eas'ly underſtood by any.
The life of man's much ſweet'ned by *Diſcourſe*,
Communication having ſuch a force,
And vertue, (like a Load-ſtone) drawing to't,
That comforts many-fold ſpring from this root.
Without *Society*, how would men mourn,
And live like *Anchorites* and *Monks* forlorn?
Man when in *Paradiſe*, (that *bleſſed ſtate*)
At firſt, while yet *alone* without a *mate*,
That *happineſs* it ſelf, ſeem'd not complete,
Until a *help* was found out for him *mete*,

Which (as recorded is in holy-Writ)
Almighty God himſelf, did count moſt fit,
And *joyn'd* one to him for *Society*:
Which argues plainly that *good Company*
May lawfully be kept, which may improve
Vertues and *graces* in us, and our love
Increaſe in one another, and invite
Each to good works, and thereunto incite.
That man who hath no *friend* muſt needs be *ſad*,
And his Condition miſerable bad,
Friendſhip, (that ſweet and neceſſary tye,)
At firſt is got by *familiarity*,
And that doth through *Acquaintance* riſe: But he
That is debarr'd of all *Society*,
How anxi'ous muſt his life be to him, when
He wants ſo chief a happineſs of men?
To ſuch as have been us'd unto a *Cell*,
And ſo accuſtomed themſelves to dwell,
It is not irkſome, no diſcouragement,
'Twas their own choice, and they are beſt content:
But thoſe that have frequented *Company*,
And plac'd therein a great *felicity*,
When unexpected *Sickneſs* checks delight,
And baniſhes *Aſſociates* from their ſight,
By a ſequeſt'ring each from other, ſo,
Thoſe dare not come to them, nor can theſe go;
Oh what an extaſie and ſurprize ſtrange
This interpoſal cauſeth! and what change!
How do they then like ſolitary doves
Bemoan their Widow'd ſtate, and dear loſt loves.
So hard it is for cuſtome to diſpence,
And yeild to that, for which there's no defence:
Thus 'tis with many whom this *Viſitation*,
Tyes and Confines unto their habitation.

And now in this my long and sharp Confinement,
By which I was depriv'd of all Imployment
That in the least might any way amount
Or turn unto a lively-hood-account,
(Which thing, next to my Childrens loss, was chief,
And greatest of my smart and worldly grief,)
If it should here demanded be of me,
How I did brook want of *Societie?*
I must confess, that loss, I found hard tryal,
(And most unsav'ry 'tis without denial,)
For (if I should speak freely and the truth,)
Society I've lov'd ev'n from my youth,
And *Conversation* amongst *friends* hath bin
Oft-times to me a thing delighted in,
My business also that I have, when any,
Leads me thereto, which doth depend on many.
But being thus constrain'd to house-aboad,
And so with-held from follow'ing work abroad,
Also of all things else almost bereft,
This yet some solace was, and comfort left,
That though debarr'd *Society* with men,
I still might have *converse* with *Book* and *Pen:*
These (though small refuge for to flye to, be,
Yet) were means yielding much content to me;
(For idleness I alwayes hate, and flye it,
Knowing no goodness ever can come by it,)
With *Pen* and *Ink* I kept my hand in ure,
Hoping this Exile would not long endure;
And such good *Books* I had, (though read before)
I now found time enough to re-read o're,
With profit too (I hope,) for *Information*,
Which may conduce to practick *Conversation.*
This studious course, to which I was inclin'd,
Diverted many sad thoughts from my mind,

And

And thereby did that saying verefie,
When *most alone*, then *least alone* was I.

The CONCLUSION.

I Fear, if it should now here be enquir'd,
The Answer would be, that my Reader's tyr'd:
My Discourse therefore on this sad *occasion*,
I'le break off, and conclude with *exhortation*.
(For here I would a word or two wedg in
In season, which upon my friends might win)
To such, whom God hath *hid*, and heads did *cover*,
Whilst the *destroying Angel* did pass over,
Who, like the *Israelites* in *Goshen* dwelt,
In midst of *Judgments*, and yet nothing felt,
Or like to *brands* which from the *fire* were snatch'd,
When thousands round about i'th *flame* were catch'd,
Who, with *distinguish'd mercy* to this day,
Have had their *lives* giv'n to them for a *prey*:
How are these bound, by special *Obligation*,
To praise God for this signal *preservation*?
And thankfully record his mercies high,
Living up to them, in sincerity?
Let these take heed, not *fearless* be *secure*,
Since there can none of one dayes life be sure;
Gods scourge is not thrown quite out of his hand,
His *Judgments* still doth hover o're the *Land*,
And whoso marched not i'th *Van* last year,
May be pres'd this, and made bring up the *Rear*:
What though the *Death-bills* now but low amount,
Who knows whose *lot* may fall in *next weeks Count*?
Let therefore none presume here to deprive
Almighty God of his *Prerogative*;

I mean, by *cenſuring*, let that remain
To him, to whom it only doth pertain;
Nor let them dare into his *Counſels* prye,
Theſe ſecrets be, (*Arcana Imperî:*)
All *actings* here, have not their *reaſons* given,
And hee'l fall ſhort, that fetches them from *Heaven.*
Think not that where *afflictions* rod is ſent,
There alwayes is deſerv'd moſt *puniſhment*,
(This was *Job's* friends fault, and it is related
To be avoided, and not imitated:)
God hath his ſev'ral *ends*, paſt finding out,
In all his *Diſpenſations*, without doubt,
As ſome for *tryals*, ſome *examples* made,
That others may look on, and be afraid;
And when a publique *Judgment's* on a Land,
His precious ones do feel his angry *hand*
As well as others: And recorded lyes
In *ſacred Writ* by *Solomon* the wiſe,
That as *to bad*, ſo doth *to good* befall,
And *all things* here happen *alike to all*;
As *Common mercie* unto all is ſent,
So *gen'ral Judgments* have the like extent:
Yet God as a free *Agent* worketh ſtill,
He ſpares, or ſtrikes, according to his will,
If he ſayes, Strike, *Death* muſt and will come in,
For *Death* we know is the reward of *Sin*;
Whoſo hath no *Sin* then, and only *he*
From *Sickneſs* is exempt, and from *Death* free:
But if none ſuch, let all be then concluded,
As under *Sin*, ſo not from *wrath* excluded.
What now remains? but that we all ſubmit
Unto his *providence*, as is moſt fit,
Waiting his *will:* And let us moderate
Our *fears*, which often are inordinate,

Oh whereby may I, or who is't that can
Fully deſcribe *the Plague-affrighted man!*
Twere well we could the *Peſt* o'th *Soul* ſo ſhun,
As we do from the *Bodyes ſickneſs* run,
And regulate our *lives*, ſo that we may
Stand in the *breach*, and turn Gods *wrath* away.
Thus we, by true *repentance* might prevent
His high *diſpleaſure*, and our *puniſhment*,
Then needed not our *fears* ſo to poſſeſs us,
Having Gods *promiſe* in his *Word* to bleſs us.
Shall *Paſſing-bells* for dying men afflict us?
And not the *Judgments* of our God affright us?
Shall *Weekly Bills* of *Pariſh-Clerks* more move us
Than *Oracles* of Miniſters improve us?
Would we then *flye*, becauſe we *fear Infection?*
Let's *flye* under the *wings* of *Gods protection*;
Let us our hearty *pray'rs* to him direct,
Avoid the *Cauſe*, and ſo prevent th' *Effect*.

POSTSCRIPT.

THis ne'r intended was t' have ſeen the light,
Had not ſome friends importun'd me, it might:
But ſince 'tis ſo, a further boone I crave,
Under your wings it may protection have.

FINIS.